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FIRST DETAILED INTERROGATION REPORT ON
SS STURMBANNFUEHRER REGUS, Dr. Otto AND
SS UNTERSTURMFUEHRER STRAUSS, Otto.

This report contains information on the organisation
of Unternehmen CYPRESSE, agents despatched, P/O network,
and methods employed; on relations with the Gamma Group
10 Flotilla MAS and other sabotage organisations; on
activities of VI/Z ITALIEN; and on personalities.

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6. ACTIVITIES OF VI/Z ITALIEN

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2. ORGANISATION OF UNTERNEHMEN CYPRESSE.(a) Formation and Functions.

At end Jun 44 BEGUS was recalled from GREECE to BERLIN to receive a new appointment. The Gruppenleiter VI/B RSHA, SS Standartenfuehrer STEIMLE, who, according to Source, was also Deputy VI/S, discussed with him the establishment of a new sabotage organisation in ITALY with HQ in VERONA. He showed him a letter from HIMMLER addressed to Amt VI in which he requested increased sabotage activity in the Italian theatre.

The tasks of the new organisation, which was to come under Gruppe VI/S, and was to be known as "ZER ITALIEN" (ZER = Zerstörung-Sabotage), were laid down as follows:-

- (i) Organisation of a post-occupational sabotage network in NORTH ITALY. The sabotage work was to be directed mainly against Allied lines of communication and supply.
- (ii) Reviving (Aktivierung) of the already existent sabotage network in Allied occupied ITALY, which should take on the character of resistance activities (Aufstandsbewegungen) but be directed against Allied lines of supply.
- (iii) Organisation of short range "Commando" raids with the object of hampering Allied supply lines in the front line areas.
- (iv) Establishment of a laboratory for the production of false documents etc. for the new sabotage organisation and Abt VI B&S ITALIEN. The existence of the laboratory was to be kept secret from Amt VI/F RSHA, which would immediately claim it if it became known, and it was intended to keep the laboratory independent of the already existing VI/F institutions in ITALY.
- (v) Political information, if any, obtained during the conducting of sabotage work, was to be directed to Abt VI B&S ITALIEN. For the task of proper evaluation of such information SS Untersturmfuehrer WOLFF, of B&S TRIESTE, was to be attached to BEGUS' staff.

The new organisation was to use only Italian personnel for active sabotage work. STEIMLE also told BEGUS to liaise closely with the Gamma Group and the VEGA Bn of 10 Flotilla MAS for coordination of sabotage activities and to attempt to recruit volunteers for sabotage from units of the Italian Republican Forces. He was promised a sabotage instructor from VI/S later on when he had become organised, and in the meantime was allotted NEGRONI. He was also told to exercise advisory control over the SS Jagdverband under Oblt SOELDER which was operating in ITALY under control of Stabschef der Jagdverbände (SKORZENY.)

(b) Relations with Abt VI B&S ITALIEN.

For discipline and funds BEGUS came under B&S ITALIEN. On the occasion of the BERLIN meeting STEIMLE also discussed with BEGUS the position of the new organisation with regard to Abt VI. STEIMLE said at first that BEGUS would be working under his VI/B representative in ITALY, SS Sturmbannfuehrer HUEGEL, Leiter VI B&S ITALIEN. BEGUS objected to this, pointing out that he was much older than HUEGEL and had far longer service, and therefore would not agree to being placed under his orders. STEIMLE accepted this point of view, and promised to inform HUEGEL about it.

In spite of this, after BEGUS' arrival in VERONA at beg Jul 44, he found that HUEGEL still expected to control the work of the new organisation, as he considered himself as Leiter VI to be the chief representative in ITALY for all departments of Amt VI. BEGUS opposed this conception as vigorously as he could,

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and maintained that HUEGEL's functions were restricted to controlling political espionage for Gruppe VI/B, the Gruppe concerned with Western EUROPE, including ITALY and SWITZERLAND, and that he had no authority over the work of VI/S, to which BEGUS' organisation belonged. HUEGEL maintained that he had been given authority by STEIMLE and SCHELLENBERG to control all Amt VI work in the Italian theatre, and the matter was eventually referred for clarification to Amt VI. It was laid down that BEGUS should in fact operate independently of HUEGEL, and the question was not raised again. Relations between the two, however, remained strained.

SS Obersturmbannfuehrer SKORZENY, Gruppenleiter VI/S, discussed the matter with BEGUS on a later visit to ITALY, and said that if he had been in BERLIN when the latter was given his original instructions by STEIMLE the question of his subordination to HUEGEL would never even have been raised, as he was definitely opposed to any such arrangement.

(c) Functional Organisation

i) Title

The name "Unternehmen CYPRESSE" came into being about Nov 44, when an order came from the RSHA that the designation "Unternehmen" was to be used for all organisations of the type of BEGUS' unit. Simultaneously the name "Kommandeur" was given to the leader of such organisations. Before that BEGUS was "Leiter ZER ITALIEN".

ii) Components and Locations

The unit consisted of:-

HQ

Transit Camp for agents and temporary sabotage school set up in Jul 44, (a permanent school was envisaged, but never materialised).

W/T School (training began Nov 44).

W/T Station (set up in Aug 44)

Laboratory (set up in Jan 45, ready for work in Apr 45.)

At first BEGUS set up his HQ in the Villa GREZZANA at CAMPALTO near VERONA. End Aug 44 the HQ was transferred to VERONA, Strada San FERMO, 19, while CAMPALTO remained a transit camp for agents and a temporary sabotage school. Mid Oct 44 the HQ moved to the building of Bds ITALIEN, the Palazzo delle Assicurazioni, in Corso Can Grande. Beg Jan 45 a part of the HQ with BEGUS left VERONA and set up in the Villa "EISECK" in KLAUSEN (CHIUSA) near BOLZANO. The other part of the HQ stayed till mid Feb 45 in the Palazzo delle Assicurazioni, when it went to the Villa GREZZANA at CAMPALTO. Mid Feb 45 the W/T School and W/T Station, at first in the Villa GREZZANA, and the newly set up laboratory were established in the Villa "SONNE" at ST ULRICH (ORTISEI) near BOLZANO. Thus in the end the various components of Unternehmen CYPRESSE were located as follows:-

Part of HQ with BEGUS.	-	KLAUSEN (CHIUSA)
Part of HQ with Deputy SS Hauptsturmfuehrer TUNNAT	-	CAMPALTO
Transit camp and temporary school for sabotage agents under TUNNAT.	-	CAMPALTO
Laboratory, W/T station and W/T school, all under SS Ober- sturmfuehrer STRAUSS	-	ST. ULRICH (ORTISEI)

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